

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with William J. Sapone on February 20, 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

In claim 23, in line 6, after "rim portion" inserted --within a respective one of said slotted openings--.

In claim 23, in line 8, before "the fitting longitudinal" inserted --the slotted openings, --.

In claim 23, in line 11, after "extending through" inserted --said slotted openings and--.

In claim 32, in lines 4-7, after "a longitudinal bore" deleted " , a threaded attachment means passing through the rim mounting fitting longitudinal bores and the rotatable link bore for assembling the rim mounting fittings and the rotatable link together, the rotatable link being rotatable relative to the rim mounting fittings".

In claim 32, in lines 9-10, after "a rim of a pipe" deleted " , by fixing the rim mounting fittings to a pair of opposed deformable rim portions surrounding the openings" and replaced with -- , the slotted openings defining a pair of

opposed deformable rim portions, by fixing each of the rim mounting fittings to a corresponding deformable rim portion within a respective one of the slotted openings, the slotted openings, the fitting longitudinal bores and rotatable link bore being in coaxial alignment, a threaded attachment means passing through the slotted openings, the rim mounting fitting longitudinal bores and the rotatable link bore for assembling the rim mounting fittings and the rotatable link together, the rotatable link being rotatable relative to the rim mounting fittings--.

In claim 32, in line 13, after "link, and" deleted " , , ".

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As to claims 23 and 32, Skahill (US 4,077,655) discloses the claimed rotatable link assembly with the exception of the slotted openings defining a pair of opposed deformable rim portions; a threaded attachment means extending through the coaxial fitting and rotatable link longitudinal bores for assembling the rim mounting fittings and the rotatable link into a unit, mounted to the deformable rim portions which are deformed thereby, the deformed rim portions providing a mechanical tension which is transferred as compressive forces in the longitudinal direction of the attachment means to the rim mounting fittings which frictionally engage the rotatable link disposed therebetween, the rotatable link having an axis of rotation along the longitudinal axis of the threaded attachment means, such that tightening or loosening the threaded attachment means varies the deformation of the rim portions and adjusts the

compressive and frictional forces exerted on the rotatable link to adjust the ease of rotating the rotatable link.

There is no teaching or suggestion, absent the applicant's own disclosure, for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the rotatable link assembly disclosed by Skahill to have the above mentioned elemental features. Furthermore, such modifications would yield unexpected and unpredictable results.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the applicant's disclosure. The following patent shows the state of the art with respect to rotatable link assemblies:

See (US 3,851,982) is cited for pertaining to link assemblies comprising a pipe having opposed slotted openings, a pair of rim mounting fittings, a rotatable link and a threaded attachment means.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MICHAEL P. FERGUSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7081. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (6:30am-3:00pm).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571)272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

MPF
02/20/09

/Michael P. Ferguson/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3679